

My name is Kirk Mettler and I would like to thank Co-Chair Colman and Co-Chair Fox and the members of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Raised Bill 6589.

For the past six years, I have waited for a phone call informing me that my daughter is either dead, or that her mother has been arrested; and 3 times I have received that call.

More must be done to protect the defenseless, and to punish those who so callously risk their precious lives. Treatment is important, but I have seen daughters mother attend treatment several times over the last 6 years, only to reoffend time and time again. This is not surprising, for even with treatment, there is a 65% chance of relapse for an alcoholic in the first year of treatment, and that number increases to 95% if treatment is sought due to an arrest.

For my daughter, that has meant a 100% guarantee that her life is in jeopardy everyday she is in the car with her mother. She is a child unable to question the direction of a parent who tells her to get in the car even though that parent is barely able to stand. My daughter may not even understand that it is unusual for a mother to swerve all over the road, disperse children off a basketball court as she drives onto it, or ram into the local donut shop. My daughter may even think it normal to take a ride in a police car every couple of years, after her mother has been arrested for yet another DUI. Perhaps deep down she hopes that this time, someone will protect her for this mortal danger. I know I pray for that every day.

It is important to remember that when we are talking about a second conviction for DUI, we are actually talking about a third arrest and a habitual offender. I understand that for each DUI arrest, the average person drives under the influence roughly 87 times. That means my daughter may have ridden with her alcohol induced mother as much as 252 times in the last six years!

It is amazing she is still alive.

My daughter's mother should be severely punished for her actions; so far nothing else has discouraged her from risking my daughter's life again. She has served no jail time, and the monitoring and accountability for violating her probation were non-existent.

I ask that the State of Connecticut do for its other children what it has failed to do for my daughter -allow them a chance to grow up free from such harm. Protect them by punishing those who place them in a vehicle of death, and prevent from ever being able to do such a thing again. Never allow an innocent, defenseless child to be victimized over and over.

I want to thank MADD and the Victims Advocate for their efforts to protect my daughter, and hold those who would endanger her life accountable. They have given me hope that someday I will no longer be waiting for that phone call.

I am in support of the purposed bill. Thank you again and please vote in favor for this bill to protect my daughter.

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